



**George R. Nethercutt, Jr.**

223 Cannon House Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20515

202-225-2006 FAX: 202-225-3392

e-mail: [www.house.gov/nethercutt/contact](http://www.house.gov/nethercutt/contact)

Proudly representing Eastern Washington in the United States House of Representatives

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 12, 2002

Contact: April Gentry  
(202) 225-2006

## **Nethercutt tells committee: It's time to separate eco-terrorists from activists**

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Rep. George Nethercutt (WA-05) told a House subcommittee today that eco-terrorists are a threat to agriculture and technology enterprises in Washington state and across America -- and he has introduced legislation to stop those terrorists in their tracks.

Testifying before the House Resources Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health, Nethercutt said it's time to separate terrorist groups from mainstream activist groups and send a message that terrorism will not be tolerated.

"There is a difference between environmental activism and environmental terrorism," Nethercutt said. "Protest is a mode of free expression that is every person's constitutional right, but destruction of property in the name of a cause is terrorism. Destroying research facilities -- facilities that do work to improve the lives of humans and animals -- creates a disincentive to do research and wastes taxpayers' money. It's time to stake out the difference between peaceful protesters and terrorists."

Nethercutt told the committee that new laws are needed to stop eco-terrorists and punish those who commit crimes.

"I think the best way to deal with the eco-terrorists is to use the same tactics we're using in our current war on terrorism: Improve our intelligence, free the hands of law enforcement, isolate terrorists from allies and assistance, and cut off their funding."

The Agroterrorism Prevention Act of 2001, H.R. 2795, introduced by Nethercutt last year would broaden current definitions to protect all plant and animal research, enhance penalties for animal or plant enterprise terrorism, allow the FBI to investigate crimes under the Racketeer Influenced Corrupt Organizations Act, and establish an incident clearinghouse to strengthen local law enforcement efforts.

Acts of violence and vandalism by the Earth Liberation Front were the focus of today's hearing. The group has claimed responsibility for more than \$40 million in property damage in North America since 1997. In December, ELF and its partner organization, the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), together claimed responsibility for 137 crimes, including vandalism and arson during 2001. Last year FBI Director Louis Freeh identified eco-terrorist organizations such as ELF as one of America's primary domestic terrorism threats.

"Agriculture, forestry and science have been under attack in Washington state for years, and constituents have long expressed their concerns with criminal activity that threatens both their lives and their livelihood," Nethercutt said. "I met with one scientist recently who told me she has been physically threatened by radicals and fears for her safety. 'Yet all I want to do is cure breast cancer,' she says. The eco-terrorists' actions show they place no value on human or animal lives."

"It's time that we draw a line in the sand and let eco-terrorists know, we will not stand for terrorism of any kind in our homeland."

###